

Dear Parents and Carers,

I thought it was timely to touch base with you as we edge closer to the school holidays. I thank you for the support you have given the school throughout Term 1 as we've navigated easing of community restrictions not being mirrored at schools, the distribution of RATs, increased cases of COVID and changes in health advice relating to quarantining and isolating.

### **Easing of Restrictions**

As Florence mentioned in her Telopea Topics article, towards the end of this term there has been an easing of restrictions in schools that I expect will carry into Term 2. Sporting events, assemblies, excursions, camps and non-cohorted musical and dance rehearsals can now take place. It is important to note, however, that many of the COVID safety measures such as mask wearing for all adults and secondary students, physical distancing for adults, cohorting in different year levels, and staying home and testing if you're unwell, do remain in place. Our ventilation plan remains in place also, and with the onset of cooler weather, we are looking at how we can modify it while still allowing adequate ventilation. To keep children as comfortable as possible, I ask that you ensure they are wearing warm clothes to school on the cooler days.

While we're still not able to invite parents/carers to join us at school for events in general, with COVID Safe Plans in place we can hold P&C and Board meetings that occur outside school hours onsite from the beginning of Term 2.

### **Staffing Plan**

As with all areas of the community, our school workforce has been impacted by COVID. Our staffing officer and staff have done an amazing job to minimise the impact, employing external relief staff, utilising in-built relief and taking on extra classes and/or duties. We have also been directly supported by the Education Directorate through the allocation of relief teachers (when available) to Telopea on days of high staff absence and the provision of a structured, staged plan that outlines steps to take on days of increased staff absence. In line with this plan, there may be days where classes are split, classes are combined, and cohorting is relaxed on the playground and in classrooms to ensure adequate supervision.

### **Looking After Each Other**

While maintaining high expectations and standards, it is worth us keeping in mind that all areas of our community are being impacted, and that in some instances, this is causing people to be 'stretched' beyond their comfort zones or normal modes of operation. I mention this as it is important as a community that we recognise this and continue to support each other. This may be as simple as checking in with people, asking if they are OK, or giving consideration to extended response times for communication. Whilst under normal circumstances we try to respond to emails and phone calls within 48 hours, with many staff juggling multiple roles at times due to staff absences, we ask for your understanding if there are delays. If your contact is urgent, please be sure to include [telopea.enquiry@ed.act.edu.au](mailto:telopea.enquiry@ed.act.edu.au) in the recipient list and highlight that your request is time sensitive.



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## Family Statements

You should have received family statements requesting payment of voluntary contributions recently. These contributions are used in a range of ways to enrich the learning of students, and if you're able to make a contribution, it will be greatly appreciated. Please contact our Business Manager, Mary Ryan, if you have questions regarding the family statements.

## Raising Concerns with the School

As always, I encourage you to make regular contact with classroom teachers to discuss your child's learning, particularly if you have questions or concerns. Recent events have, however, highlighted the need for a centralised mechanism for collecting broader concerns as opposed to asking parents/carers to contact particular staff for different issues. The front end of the proposed solution will be a simple online form that will be available early in Term 2 with the back-end processes allowing us easier oversight of concerns and a more cohesive way to track communications and resolution actions. I must say that I was concerned by reports I received about comments made by some parents/carers across social media platforms in relation to the issues raised about the toilets at the school, and while I'm hoping the reports were inaccurate, I am confident that better processes for managing concerns should give parents/carers a good avenue to have their voices heard and for us to respond.

I hope the school holiday period is positive for you all and that your children get a chance to relax a little from the rigors of formal learning.

Regards,  
Jason.



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